VOL. 131 No. 12 • THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025 North Texas Daily @NTDaily @NTDaily NTDAILY.COM

North Texas Daily

Serving the University of North Texas & Denton since 1916

News

‘Food is the most accessible resource’: United Way of Denton County establishes food insecurity relief fund

By Lauren Pruett
Staff Writer

The United Way of Denton County established the Denton County Food Insecurity Relief Fund in response to increased food insecurity resulting from disruptions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

At the time of writing, SNAP recipients were no longer able to access their benefits starting Nov. 1 due to an extended government shutdown, resulting in higher demand at food banks in the Denton County area. Now, cited as the longest government shutdown in United States history, a bipartisan bill to end the shutdown moves to the U.S. House after passing in the Senate on Nov. 10.

“Collaboration is key, and we wanted to be a good partner to the Tarrant Area Food Bank as the largest distributor of food in Denton County,” said Shelby Redondo-Macon, United Way’s director of programs and university alumna.

Redondo-Macon said a part of United Way’s organizational role is to respond to disasters and crises, which can involve setting up a relief fund and distributing those funds to impacted households.

Redondo-Macon said that, just like the tornadoes that hit northern Denton County last April, food insecurity can be a disaster.

The Diamond Eagle Student Resource Center has a mobile food pantry at Lot 20 every month. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

“This is a disaster for a lot of our households that are living paycheck to paycheck and depend on supplemental assistance to get food on their tables,” Redondo-Macon said. “When we were talking about what to do [...], part of that was, ‘Well, we know how to respond to a natural disaster. Let’s do the same thing for this.’”

Redondo-Macon said it is important for United Way to support local food pantries.

“We have food pantries, and it’s one thing to promote where people [can] go, and we’re definitely doing that,” Redondo-Macon said. “But we can’t just flood the doors of these food pantries without the background work, the dollars [and] the donations they also need to help with the increase that’s coming in their doors.”

The food insecurity relief fund, established on Oct. 29, will solicit donations from corporations to individuals in Denton County. The money will be distributed equally among the food pantries associated with the Tarrant Area Food Bank. As of Nov. 10, $9,755 has been raised.

UNITED continues on page 2

Sports

Mean Green volleyball outperforms preseason projections, reaches 20 wins

By Ruben Plascencia
Staff Writer

In his first season as North Texas women’s volleyball head coach, Dave Fleming secured the first 20-win season since 2017 and only the 11th in the program’s 50 seasons in their Nov. 9 game.

Despite motivations to crush a second-to-last projection in the American Conference preseason poll, the success still seems far-fetched to Fleming and his team.

“I think we’re in really good position,” Fleming said. “I’m just really proud of the team [and] the buy-in to being ‘team-y’ people. The fact that we’re [20-7] at this point is kind of beyond my wildest dreams.”

North Texas (20-7, 10-4 American Conference) is fourth in the American Conference but owns a head-to-head win over third-place Tulsa (20-6, 10-4 American Conference). With the team’s record, its American Conference Volleyball Championship spot has been secured since Nov. 2.

The Mean Green squeezed in as the tournament’s seventh seed last season, relying on crucial upsets in their final games.

“Especially since last year [...], we were scrapping for wins towards the end,” sophomore outside hitter Reagan Bedell said. “It’s kind of nice now. We can play even more freely than we were before.”

Between the two seasons, roster turnover raised offseason doubts. North Texas lost potential returning hitters Payton Van Veen and Claire Dewine, who Fleming said would have played a major role.

The Mean Green volleyball team celebrates after winning a long rally against East Carolina University at the UNT Volleyball Center on Oct. 17, 2025. **Photo by Sarah Stokes**

“Especially because we had to replace about 80 percent of the offense and then we lost two kids late [...],” Fleming said. “We knew going into the fall that we weren’t going to have an all-American arm or someone that could step up and get like five kills in a set for us.”

Instead, a young roster leaned on its play style, focusing on getting middle blockers heavily involved to create outside chances. As a result, defense has become the team’s claim to fame.

North Texas has held opponents to a conference-best .166 hitting percentage. It also leads the league in preventing opponent kills and assists per set, at 10.87 and 10.11, respectively.

“I think it has to do a lot with our coaches making us be disciplined in everything that we do,” freshman defensive specialist Alessandra Romo said. ”Discipline is the biggest thing that we’ve had to focus on.”

VOLLEYBALL continues on page 6

What’s Inside:

The Dose pg.5
ROSALÍA continues to innovate in ‘LUX’

Opinion pg.8
Students should not sacrifice their mental well-being for academic superiority

Arts & Life

Attendees explore vendor booths inside First United Methodist Church during the Alternative Gifts Fair on Nov. 7, 2025. **Photo by Dilip Devanda**

Annual Alternative Gifts Fair raises over $92,000

By Sophia Carbajal
Senior Arts & Life Writer

In the gym of Denton’s First United Methodist Church, dozens of people shopped from over 35 businesses and nonprofit organizations selling items like jewelry, clothing, ceramics and food Nov. 7-9.

All of these vendors were part of the Alternative Gifts Fair, an annual event organized by FUMC that raises money for each organization’s mission. Karen Anderson-Lain, a university communications studies principal lecturer, has been a member of the Alternative Gifts Fair Committee for nine years. Anderson-Lain said she fell in love with the fair’s purpose and how it supports so many impactful organizations.

“They get to tell their story, we get to support the work they do and it’s a way our church can give back our time and help those organizations,” Anderson-Lain said. “We can’t write an $80,000 check, but we raised over $80,000 last year.”

This year, the fair was even more successful and raised over $92,000 for the attending businesses, organizations and nonprofits over the weekend. Located at 201 S Locust St., the event took place on Friday, Nov. 7, from 5-8 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Anderson-Lain said the fair lets shoppers buy holiday gifts for their loved ones while simultaneously supporting impactful missions and nonprofits, a process of giving back that she has been doing for years.

“We talk about shopping once and giving twice,” Anderson-Lain said. “Because as you shop, you are giving not only to the person you are buying your holiday gift for, but you’re also giving back to the community and that organization.”

GIFTS continues on page 4

North Texas Daily

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief
Gianna Ortner-Findlay
@giannae.ortner_reports

Managing Editor
Hannah Everett
@hannah.g.everett

Design Editor
Mekielle Vaughn
@notso_meek

Digital Editor
Aiden Gonzalez
@_xiden

News Editor
Shehzil Imran
@Shehzildoesjournalism

Arts & Life/The Dose Editor
Matthew Winter
@matthewwinter_journalism

Opinion Editor
Alejandra Osegueda

Video Editor
Cooper Collins
@cooper_videos

Photo Editor
Ismael Beltran
@izzyf1icks

Illustrations Editor
Victoria Maldonado
@esmerelda.vic

Sports Editor
Justin Na

Production Team

Page Designer
Janese Mashell
@janloumas

Copyeditor
Baylee Cantrell
@bayleeisonline

Copyeditor
Samantha Heath
@samdoesjournalism

Faculty Advisor
Randy Loftis
940-565-3495//Randy.Loftis@unt.edu

Scan to sign up for our weekly newsletter, *The Daily Digest*

Food insecurity relief fund raises more than $9,700

UNITED continued from page 1

Over 20 Denton food banks receive their food from the Tarrant Area Food Bank, including the university's food pantry. On Nov. 7, the university hosted a mobile food drive for anyone in the Denton community to receive food items.

Izzy, a university senior and mother to a three-year-old daughter, came to the mobile food pantry during one of her class times. She said she lost her SNAP benefits back in September.

Izzy, who requested to be identified by first name only, said she was supposed to have her benefits renewed, but they were delayed, as most SNAP recipients are required to reapply every six to 12 months. Then, the government shut down.

"It's been a bit of a struggle," Izzy said. "My daughter, Bella, is really affected by it. All the SNAP I received went to my daughter. That's why we have been using these food pantries and utilizing the resources of Denton, trying to get as much as we can to help out at our house."

Izzy applied for SNAP when Bella was only a year old. She said it took her two years to get approved and was only on SNAP for six months before they lost their benefits.

A volunteer prepares a food basket at the Diamond Eagle Student Resource Center mobile food pantry at Lot 20 on Nov. 7, 2025.
Photo by Katie Brackens

"It was barely any time, and they took it away," Izzy said. "Then this whole shutdown came, and it's just stuck. It doesn't say when we're going to get benefits or if we got approved for it again."

Izzy said most food banks are only open during her class times, so to put food on the table, she is forced to miss class.

"I've had to worry more," Izzy said. "Right now, this [mobile food pantry] was in one of my class times. It's been a really hard struggle, but you do what you gotta do."

According to Feeding America, Texas has the highest rate of food insecurity in the nation, with one in six households being food insecure. According to the Tarrant Area Food Bank, 46,000 individuals, 13.6% of people in Denton County experience food insecurity every day.

Redondo-Macon said there are 112,00 Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed households in Denton County. ALICE households, Redondo-Macon explained, are households that experience food insecurity and may be in financial crises.

"[ALICE] households are often living paycheck-to-paycheck [and are] one flat tire, one circumstance away from being in a crisis," Redondo-Macon said. "Before that crisis hits, they know that they can get food. Food is the most accessible resource."

Bobby Hughes, 51, who is a computer engineering major, is another student at the university who came to the mobile food pantry. Hughes said she understands the struggle of putting food on the table.

"We already struggle and are already on food stamps," Hughes said. "I need all the help I can get, especially towards the end of the semester."

Hughes, along with her 21-year-old son, received SNAP benefits up until the government shut down. Hughes said, however, that the benefits only covered a third of her grocery costs.

"It's so insane how you go grocery shopping these days," Hughes said. "You can fill a hand basket and be spending $100."

Hughes said she has been on and off food stamps for most of her life and has had a "struggling income." Like the millions of other Americans who rely on SNAP, Hughes said the shutdown and political atmosphere toward SNAP have her worried.

"It makes me really nervous," Hughes said. "I know there are a lot of politicians, and other people influenced by politicians, that think that people on food stamps are just trying to get a free ride. [But] most people that need the help are working, trying and fighting."

North Texas Daily's list of regional food resources

By Hannah Everett
Managing Editor

On Nov. 1, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits were unavailable to the approximately 41.7 million Americans, including about 3.5 million Texans, who rely on the program each month.

As of Nov. 10, some Texans have begun receiving partial SNAP payments after delays of more than a week. Other Texans' payments are still in limbo.

The United States Senate passed a funding bill to end the country's longest government shutdown on Nov. 10, which, at the time of writing, is awaiting passage by the House. On Nov. 11, the Supreme Court extended an order, set to expire just before midnight on Thursday, to continue blocking SNAP funding until the government reopens.

The *North Texas Daily* has gathered a list of food resources for students and Denton residents impacted by the SNAP funding freeze.

North Texas Food Bank 'Find Food' feature

The North Texas Food Bank is a nonprofit relief organization that packages and distributes food to more than 400 food pantries across 13 North Texas counties. The food bank's website has a "Find Food" feature with an interactive map. Once a zip code is entered, people can filter results to show nearby pantries within five to 90 miles.

The map can be found by visiting the North Texas Food Bank website, navigating to the "Food Assistance" tab and clicking on "Find a Food Pantry." The search results show resources with addresses and operation hours.

Tarrant Area Food Bank 'Find Local Food' feature

The Tarrant Area Food Bank, with a TAFB North and TAFB West, is a food distribution center serving pantries in 13 counties. The TAFB North is located at the Serve Denton headquarters, 306 N. Loop 288, Suite 113, Denton, TX 76209.

The "Find Local Food" feature can be found by going to the Tarrant Area Food Bank website, navigating to the "Find Food" tab and clicking on the "Find Food Map" page. Similar to the NTFB map, the results can be filtered by radius and include addresses and operation hours.

Denton Community Food Center

The Denton Community Food Center, located at 306 N. Loop 288, Suite 400, Denton, TX 76209, is currently operating by appointment only. At DCFC, clients receive approximately enough food to feed a family of four for a week.

Appointments can be made by visiting the DCFC website and filling out the appointment registration form in the top-right corner of the webpage. For the first appointment, people must bring a valid photo ID with a current address in northern Denton County.

Operating hours are Monday and Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., by appointment only.

Denton Wesley Foundation

The Denton Wesley Foundation, located just off campus at 1501 Maple St., Denton, TX 76201, offers free lunch, groceries and coffee on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Wesley is open to university students and community members. People in need of food emergency appointments, according to the website, can contact Pastor Marianne Brown-Trigg at marianne@thedentonwesley.org.

Illustration by Mekielle Vaughn

UNT Food Pantry at Crumley Hall

The university has a food pantry in the back of Crumley Hall, 1621 W. Highland St., Denton, TX 76201. Students currently enrolled at the university can use the food pantry once a week. Students must bring their university ID card each time they use the pantry.

Upon first visit, students will be asked to complete a USDA household application form. Students will then be given a pantry card, which they must bring when using the food pantry.

Hours of operation are Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The pantry is closed on Thursdays and Sundays.

The pantry is not open when the university is closed and on the first Friday of every month, due to the monthly Mobile Food Pantry in Lot 20 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. These events are open to all community members, and no student ID is required. The next Mobile Food Pantry event is on Dec. 5.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army offers drive-thru and curbside food assistance. The Denton location, the Denton Corps Community Center located at 1508 E. McKinney St., Denton, TX 76201, is open Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Freedom Food Pantry

Denton Freedom House Ministries operates the Freedom Food Pantry. The pantry requires an online or in-person registration form to receive services and is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The pantry is located at 1720 W. University Dr., Suite 101, Denton, TX 76201.

Eugene Migliaro Corporon, regents professor of music and North Texas wind symphony conductor, to retire next summer

By Ty Scott
Staff Writer

Eugene Migliaro Corporon, regents professor of music and conductor of the North Texas Wind Symphony, announced that he will retire next summer after 31 years of teaching at the university.

Corporon's voice was filled with nostalgia as he recounted his time at the university, watching his students go from performing in class to performing for audiences of over 20,000.

"I've learned a lot here from my students [...] I learned how to teach," Corporon said. "We have some of the world's best students and it's probably now that I'm retiring that I can finally say that without trying to seem self-fulfilling."

Corporon said he will remember his time at the university fondly, having seen and taught all the young talent at the College of Music.

"I've been receiving a lot of emails and texts from my former students," Corporon said. "And they remind me of things I forgot of a long time ago that we did together or something I did that they remember. [...] it's a reflective time when you get to this point in your career."

Some of Corporon's former students went on to be music teachers themselves.

Taylor Ely, a former high school student of Corporon's in 2014, said they were happy for Corporon upon hearing of his retirement. Today, Ely is a middle school band director for Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District.

When Ely first heard the North Texas Wind Symphony, she said it changed her life.

"The trajectory of my musical life changed for the better the first time I heard a recording of the North Texas Wind Symphony," Ely said when asked if there was anything she wanted to tell Corporon. "I now have the privilege to share your work with my own students, who continue to love band, music and everything in between, thanks to the impact you've made on our field."

University music professor Eugene Migliaro Corporon poses for a photo inside his office on Nov. 7, 2025. **Photo by Ty Scott**

Ely said they would not be a music teacher without Corporon. They said Corporon inspired them by fostering their creativity and motivating them.

"No matter what the setting or the ensemble, Professor Corporon's intentionality, passion and artistry colored every second of rehearsal," Ely said. "[...] I've always admired his ability to dig into the little nuances and colors of a piece in a way that almost makes the music unfold."

Corporon's teachings did not just affect his former students. He also impacted the people around him, even those he was with for a short period, such as Geoffrey Thompson. When Thompson was in high school, he played French horn in the Georgia All-State Band, where Corporon served as a band clinician, advising bands on how to improve.

Currently, Thompson is a music teacher for the Lee County School District in Florida. Although their paths crossed for only three days, Thompson said he remembers that time fondly with Corporon.

"Just the experience of having him as a clinician was great," Thompson said about Corporon. "[...] Thank you for exposing me to some great music. Thank you for exposing so much more through the literature and many recordings."

As his retirement approaches, Corporon said the change will be an adjustment to him, as he has dedicated his life to music and teaching generations of students.

"For a conductor, it's difficult because when you retire, you lose your instrument," Corporon said. "[That is] the North Texas Wind Symphony, in my case. So I'm walking away from that"

Since retirement will give him more free time, Corporon said he will focus on other projects and discover new hobbies. He said he plans to continue his yearly visits to the Showa University of Music in Japan, where he is a frequent guest speaker.

He said he does not want to miss out on being around young, creative energy.

"Friends will say to me 'Congratulations' — it may be condolences, because it's [a] tough change," Corporon said. "[...] Now I have other projects that I do. I do a [yearly] guest-show in Japan at the Showa conservatorium, and I don't know what else will come along."

Corporon said he is grateful for his time at the university. He said he has made many memories and friends over the years and will remember them fondly.

"Until I walk out that door August 31st, I am going to be fully engaged here," Corporon said. "But then it is going to be up to me to decide how I want to use my time."

University's Turning Point USA chapter hosts Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, discusses future of conservatism in America

By Shehzil Imran
News Editor

The university's Turning Point USA chapter hosted Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Nov. 10, in which he remembered TPUSA co-founder Charlie Kirk and discussed a future for young conservatives in the country.

The event hosted around 150 attendees, with additional speeches from Paige Rasmussen, TPUSA Lone Star field representative, university student Mary-Catherine Hallmark and right-wing podcaster Sara Gonzales, host of "Sara Gonzales Unfiltered."

"I was really amazed when you can see the culmination of what Charlie Kirk was accomplishing happen in this election by getting people out to vote," Paxton said in his speech. "And encouraging college students and high school students to be engaged like they never had [...] [conservative views] actually work, unlike the woke ideas that we hear infiltrated with every day at college and high school campuses."

Paxton, who is running for a United States Senate seat in 2026, addressed the controversy the university faced regarding a viral video Hallmark posted online after Kirk was shot at Utah Valley University. Previously, Paxton made comments in a letter, expressing disapproval with the university for not addressing Hallmark directly after she said she received threats for saying Kirk's death should not be celebrated, "no matter what political beliefs."

"I really am so appreciative of Mary-Catherine, her courage and the courage of other students that are willing to stand up and exercise their right to free speech, [...]" Paxton said.

Paxton announced Oct. 16 that he is launching an investigation against the university for still not taking action against the students who "celebrated the political assassination" of Kirk and "who have threatened violent acts against students," the press release said.

"UNT's silence has made one thing clear," Hallmark said in her speech. "Their so-called 'neutrality' is nothing more than a quiet approval of the radical left's agenda."

Paxton's speech received mixed reactions from the audience. While there was applause, at least 10 people booed him, saying he is a "zionist," "bigot," and a "murderer," calling for Paxton to free death row inmate Robert Roberson.

"Ken Paxton is sort of a family friend who I vehemently disagree with," said Mason Hill, an attendee and junior studying social sciences. "He served as city attorney while my great-grandfather was a city council member [...] I think there is nothing wrong with the university approving the event. However, I am disappointed in the student body for not coming out and disagreeing more."

Before Paxton's speech, Gonzales said everything was going "really great" since President Donald Trump took office in his second term until Sept. 10, when Kirk was killed.

"I assume it was quite a clarifying moment for a lot of you, specifically on this campus, to watch the reaction it got," Gonzales said in her speech. "And since then, it really has never been more clear that we are still very much in a battle of good and evil."

Gonzales warned the audience to "really pay attention" to what is happening politically around them. She said there is a "technical partnership between the progressive radical left and Islamists," with a goal to dismantle freedom, capitalism and Christianity in the west. As an example, Gonzales mentioned the recent mayoral election in New York City, in which the Democratic Socialist candidate, Zohran Mamdani, who is Muslim, won.

Gonzales said Mamdani was voted in by "young, woke, oftentimes, mentally ill leftists," and "foreign nationals that have come here" and "exploited our legal immigration system." She said these immigrants are not assimilating and voting for values that represent America, instead, "they come in, and they vote for values antithetical to America."

"Because as much as this wokeism, marxism, progressive, communist ideology needs to be defeated, so does the other side of this alliance," Gonzales said. "The red and the green alliance need to be defeated—so does Islam. Do you know who agreed with me? Charlie Kirk, [...] He was making sure that Americans understood the dangers of inviting this in."

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton speaks during the university's Turning Point USA chapter event in the University Union Lyceum on Nov. 10, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

Gonzales' speech received applause from the audience. However, it also faced some backlash, with a few audience members voicing their disagreement during her speech. Hill said he found Gonzales' speech to be "the most violent out of all them."

"You cannot say that this is a fight of good versus evil and that you are against violent rhetoric," Hill said. "Saying stuff like [she said in her speech] is what caused Charlie Kirk to get shot. [...] this is just unbelievable that this is what we are dealing with."

Rasmussen said TPUSA's speakers are invited to speak their truth and stand on their own convictions, as long as they are "sharing our values" and believe in freedom of speech. Additionally, she said the organization is nonpartisan and hosting Paxton should not be taken as an endorsement, as the group does not endorse any candidates.

"Since the events of September 10th, it has just been incredible to see students come together and stand up to be strong, stand up for truth," Rasmussen said. "And getting out on campus without any fear —– and that's what strength does. That's what these students are doing together, they're building a community [and] that's what community does."

‘Shopping once and giving twice’: 38th annual Alternative Gifts Fair raises thousands for organizations

GIFTS continued from page 1

Tabling at the Alternative Gifts Fair is free, and each organization had a set amount of money it wanted to raise. Each time one of the organizations met its financial goal, members of the church celebrated by ringing a bell and announcing the success.

Each year, the Alternative Gifts Fair Committee chooses a nonprofit to highlight at the congregational and community artisans booth, a collection of donated items and services from dozens of local artists.

All proceeds from the artisan booths went to support the fair’s chosen organization. This year’s recipient was Friends of Shiloh Garden, a Denton community garden that donates its harvests to 17 local food pantries and other nonprofits.

FUMC received so many items that they dedicated an entire room at the event to the donations, which all went toward Shiloh Garden. There was also a silent auction featuring services from artists, such as pottery classes and custom paintings.

Denton resident Rhonda McKinzie has been volunteering at Shiloh Garden for four years and said the Alternative Gifts Fair will give the organization the boost it needs to maintain the garden and continue supporting people in need.

“We have these big hoop houses, like greenhouses, and some of those were damaged in the storm, so now we’re repairing those,” McKinzie said. “Also, the utility bills, we use a lot of water, so this will go to some really good things for the garden.”

For Shiloh Garden, this support comes at a time when food insecurity is on the rise. The current government shutdown has left many people who rely on government assistance programs, such as SNAP benefits, unsure where their next meal will come from.

Attendee Ann Clasby talks with vendor Wendy Moore about handmade jewelry at the Alternative Gifts Fair on Nov. 8, 2025. **Photo By Dilip Devanda**

McKinzie said the hours she spends in the community garden are all worth it when she gets to help communities in need.

“We give as a volunteer, but we get so much back in our hearts, because we’re helping people,” McKinzie said. “People who maybe don’t get SNAP or food stamps or maybe they’re living off social security, this is an opportunity for anybody that’s insecure of food, and it’s fresh food, and that’s what makes me happy.”

The Alternative Gifts Fair not only supported local causes but global missions as well, like the Jerri Savuto Girls Center, an organization that helps girls in Kenya escape forced child marriage and sexual violence. JSGC Board Chair Cynthia Rives is a member of FUMC and tended the organization’s booth at the fair, where they offered pecans, ornaments made by girls in Kenya and custom-cut puzzles that represent the girls’ center.

For Rives, JSGC is a way for her to live out her religious faith, and the Alternative Gifts Fair gives her a space to share that mission with more people.

“I think that my faith is one where you pray, you read scripture, you worship and then you pour yourself out in service and in mission, and it’s a constant [cycle] to live what God is calling us to do of faith in action,” Rives said.

Over the past several years, Anderson-Lain said she has watched the Alternative Gifts Fair grow from just a few vendors into a multi-day effort of service and community impact. Anderson-Lain said the fair is a great way for individuals to support worldwide efforts by simply shopping within their community.

“The fact that they’re here and have a booth and get to share that story with more people so that we can continue to support that mission, I think, is a great example of how we can make the global feel local,” Anderson-Lain said.

Things To Do:

Pam Burnley-Schol: Nested Memory

When: Friday, Nov. 14 at 11 a.m.
Where: Wells Fargo Bank Building, 101 S. Locust St., Suite B07
What: For 30 years, PDNB Gallery has specialized in showcasing photo-based art. Occasionally, the gallery has presented exhibitions of painting, sculpture, ceramics and works on paper. This month, PDNB is presenting a solo show for painter Pam Burnley-Schol. The price of entry is free.

Craft Beer Crawl

When: Saturday, Nov. 15 at noon
Where: Denton’s Downtown Square, 110 W. Hickory St.
What: This tour will take attendees through Denton beer spots. During the tour, individuals will be able to taste craft beer samples at each location. In addition to this, some of the venues will have pop-up shops where attendees are invited to buy locally curated products. Tickets for entry are $30.

reFramed Exhibition Opening Reception

When: Friday, Nov. 14 at 6 p.m.
Where: Patterson-Appleton Arts Center, 400 E. Hickory St.
What: reFramed is celebrating the official opening of their brand new signature exhibition showcasing alternative processes in photograph development and other image-making. This exhibition shows not just the final product, but the process itself, in whatever form the artists have chosen. Entrance is free.

Denton artist hosts ‘Hip To Be Square’ art show

By Noor Shaikh
Staff Writer

Local artist Monique McIntyre has been making art for as long as she can remember. Using “anything that’s tangible,” she says she creates art that errs on the psychedelic side.

McIntyre presented such works at her “Hip To Be Square” art show held last Friday at The Bearded Monk from 7 p.m. to 11:45 p.m.

“I need hip replacement because I have rheumatoid arthritis,” McIntyre said. “So the majority of the work I’m showing [at the art show] is stuff I’ve created since I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.”

McIntyre said the main reason she held the show was to raise money for her hip replacement surgery in Lithuania, and she chose to display the pieces she has made since her diagnosis.

Another reason McIntyre put on the show was that her GoFundMe raised 38 percent of her goal a few months ago.

While the show consisted of art she has made since her diagnosis, she made 16 collage pieces to be auctioned specifically for the show, using various methods and materials like woodburning, fabric, Sharpies, watercolor and more.

McIntyre says most of her work at the show is abstract, but she has also done stained-glass work, which is where many of her design concepts have come from.

“Some of the stuff [at the show] is from when I had a flare-up and I couldn’t move or walk, and I was stuck to my couch,” McIntyre said. “So then when I was stuck to my couch, I was like, I might as well do some artwork.”

McIntyre says RA does not affect her upper joints, and so she is still able to make art. She says she thinks that most people who get RA get it “where their money came from.” McIntyre worked in the restaurant industry for 30 years, serving, bartending and managing, and she says someone in that industry would have their RA affect their hips and knees.

“I’ve watched her journey over the last several years with rheumatoid arthritis, and kind of the person she was before, and how it’s been since then, and the art has always been constant,” said Katie Kernan, university alumna and Calhoun Middle School art teacher. “I’ve seen other things like her being a super active person [...] so not only do I think [this show] is a good opportunity for her to show her art, but also a way for her to get what she really needs and deserves as well.”

As an artist herself, Kernan said she and McIntyre have been best friends for about eight years. McIntyre met Kernan’s husband at a local bar, who then introduced the two to each other.

Kernan describes McIntyre’s art as funky, fun and nostalgic. She says McIntyre’s work makes her feel hopeful and positive because of the vibrancy, bright colors and patterns found in her art.

When describing McIntyre as an artist, Kernan says McIntyre stays true to herself while also being very innovative and curious about trying new things.

“This art show was to help raise money [...] and so I think that really shows that here in the Denton community, if somebody needs something, the rest of us will come together and help provide that for them,” university freshman biology major Daniel Johannsen-Brown said. “In a way that’s also creative and unique.”

Johannsen-Brown said his favorite thing about the event was getting out to support a local artist and seeing art he had not seen before. He said he does not go to many art shows, but he liked experiencing something he is not used to.

“I like the color composition [of the art] and how the shapes interact with each other,” Johannsen-Brown said. “The art that I made a bid on, it has this really cool little drawing of a figure that’s sort of similar to a lot of Japanese woodblock prints’ style, and that sort of style combined with a more abstract style.”

Artist Monique McIntyre sits in front of her art pieces during the “Hip To Be Square” art show at The Bearded Monk on Nov. 7, 2025. **Photo by Trennt Rhea**

Johannsen-Brown thought having the art show in a bar makes it unique and that the venue makes the event feel more down-to-earth and relatable.

McIntyre says she’s going abroad to Lithuania for her surgery because she thinks the healthcare system is “a racket,” and she refuses to give a company her money. She says the cost of the surgery is significantly cheaper in Lithuania than in the United States.

What McIntyre looks forward to with the hip replacement is being mobile again, without crutches or the “emotional support sticks,” as she calls them. She is also looking forward to doing some of the things she enjoys doing again, and says that being able to walk would be nice.

“The ultimate goal, obviously, is to raise funds for my hip,” McIntyre said. “But I feel like, with this being my first solo show, I just kind of wanted to show people what I’ve been doing, an accumulation of that over time, and to just kind of represent myself through my artwork in that way.”

ROSALÍA continues to innovate in newest album 'LUX'

By Riley Morgan
Staff Writer

Whether it is modern flamenco on "Los Ángeles" (2017) or alternative reggaeton on "MOTOMAMI" (2022), Spanish singer-songwriter ROSALÍA has never been afraid of exploring new genres and mixing them.

Now, with the release of her 2025 project, "LUX," she is further proving this with the album's unique blend of electronic and classical music. The project featured instrumentals performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, and lyrics sung in over a dozen languages.

The project begins with the haunting yet beautiful intro of "Sexo, Violencia y Llantas." The track starts off feeling more subdued, with piano and cello making up most of the instrumental, before it crescendos into a full orchestral piece.

Illustration by Thomas Trevino and Victoria Maldonado

The track then ends as ominous as it begins, with drums rolling into the next track.

"Reliquia" continues the orchestral production from the previous track while feeling much more upbeat. The lyrics, however, tell a much different story as ROSALÍA sings about still feeling tied to an ex-partner. The song reaches a high point with a jaw-dropping outro featuring a more electronic production and masterful use of voice modulation.

One of the most genre-bending tracks is "Divinize," which has ROSALÍA singing in Spanish and English over a beat that pairs piano with a deep bass. The lyrics continue the album's themes about getting over an ex, along with the religious imagery of rosaries and forbidden fruit.

"Porcelana" takes an experimental direction, with the track's dembow beat meshed with string instrumentals that feel like a callback to "MOTOMAMI," while still matching the sounds of "LUX." The song takes an unexpected yet appealing turn when ROSALÍA suddenly starts singing in Japanese.

"Mio Cristo Piange Diamanti" is the most classically inspired track of the project, with practically no electronic instruments and ROSALÍA singing in a more operatic style, with lyrics in Italian. Overall, it sounds fantastic and pairs well with the album's lead single, "Berghain."

"Berghain" was released on Oct. 27 and features Björk and Yves Tumor. Named after the viral, most exclusive Berlin nightclub, the song begins with ROSALÍA hitting some of the highest notes of her career in German. The track is ambitious, but it manages to achieve its wildest dreams.

Taking inspiration from regional Mexican music, "La Perla" features the musical trio Yahritza Y Su Esencia. With pointed lyrics directed toward her ex, ROSALÍA delivers what might be the most angelic-sounding diss track, including a spoken portion to really get her point across.

The following three tracks, "Mundo Nuevo," "De Madrugá," and "Dios Es Un Stalker," are all bite-sized offerings. Yet, they justify their placement on the album through their engaging production and lyrics. The key change at the end of "Dios Es Un Stalker" is a standout moment of the project.

"La Yugular" is another of the album's more experimental tracks, with its bare production spotlighting ROSALÍA's flawless lyrics and revealing more details about her public breakup through colorful imagery. The song's chorus, which is sung entirely in Arabic, is particularly moving.

"Sauvignon Blanc" and "La Rumba Del Perdón" continue the album's high quality, with the latter another standout on the tracklist. With appearances from Estrella Morente and Sílvia Pérez Cruz, the track pays homage to ROSALÍA's flamenco roots and features great vocals from all three artists.

Sung entirely in Portuguese, "Memória" is an ethereal-sounding track. The song is a duet with Portuguese singer Carminho, and the two blend their voices very well. While most of the track is mellow, the music swells during the final chorus, leaving it on a very high note.

The final track of the album is the self-reflective "Magnolias." Acting as a spiritual successor to "SAKURA," the final track of her last album, the song is grand in scale and sees the return of the album's full orchestra and choir for one last hurrah.

Even on her fourth studio album, ROSALÍA continues to push musical boundaries, releasing her best project to date. "LUX" is a maximalist masterpiece and further cements ROSALÍA as one of modern music's most distinguished artists.

Riley's rating: 5/5

Icon of the Week:

Rosalía Vila Tobella

Credit **Pedro J Pacheco**

The *Daily*'s icon of the week is Rosalía Vila Tobella, also known as ROSALÍA, for her 2025 album "LUX."

Born in Catalonia, Spain, ROSALÍA was the youngest daughter of a family with no musical background. She took an interest in performance art at an early age, and by the time she was 6 years old, she was enrolled in Taller de Músics, a music academy in Barcelona, Spain.

Spending the rest of her upbringing in music academies around Spain, she would sing at private events for as little as 80 euros.

After graduating from college in 2017, she began recording a studio album, "El mal querer" (2018). The album's single, "Malamente," entered the Billboard Music Spanish Top 100 chart in 2018, and soon after, she began gaining popularity.

Rolling Stone ranked her debut album 315th on their 500 Greatest Albums of All Time list, making it the highest-ranked Spanish-language album on the list. She has since gone on to be an 11-time Latin Grammy Award Winner and a two-time Grammy Award Winner.

Guillermo del Toro's 'Frankenstein' surprises in relatively faithful retelling

By Gianna Ortner-Findlay
Editor-in-Chief

When English author Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was creating "Frankenstein" – also known as "The Modern Prometheus" – during the "Year Without Summer" in 1816, it was in the wake of grief.

Shelley, who originally published the novel anonymously in 1818, wrote a story about reanimation as she worked through the grief of losing her own child, and would never know the true impact her worst nightmare would leave on Gothic horror.

Shelley's creation, "Frankenstein," is credited as the foundation for the modern science fiction genre, and Mexican filmmaker and author Guillermo del Toro's adaptation of the story, while not perfect, is a relatively faithful recreation of the book.

The director, best known for other Gothic horror projects like "Pan's Labyrinth" (2006) and "Crimson Peak" (2015), uses symbolism and visual effects like no other. In an interview with Bright Wall/Dark Room, writer Lauren Wilford describes the director as "a builder of worlds."

Del Toro's version of "Frankenstein" is far from the first film adaptation of the novel. However, del Toro's retelling, in the hundreds of attempts to bring the book to life, is one of the only films to capture the spirit of Shelley's story and lay it bare on the screen.

Although del Toro takes some creative liberties — more often successful than not in the film's plot and pacing— it is one of the few film adaptations of "Frankenstein" to retain the novel's Arctic flashback storyline.

While del Toro's choices serve the film's universe, other characters present in the book that are absent from the film, provide depth in the original that is missing from the adaptation. Additionally, the decision to make Victor Frankenstein (Oscar Isaac) a benefactor to a rich uncle-in-law-to-be rather than a promising student who gets lost in the search for answers feels disingenuous to the source material. This choice is semi-corrected in the portrayal of his obsession later.

The film, which was initially released Oct. 17 in a limited theatrical run, became widely available on Netflix on Nov. 7. The decision to do a limited theatrical release, intended to build anticipation for the film's later release, was a poor one. Due to limited box-office returns, the film, with an estimated budget of $120 million, grossed $422,705 worldwide.

The film is broken into three parts: the "Prelude," followed by the two chapters "Victor's Tale" and "The Creature's Tale." It pulls the audience into the world through on-site shooting locations and masterfully crafted sets.

The use of real-life locations, such as Parliament Square in Edinburgh, Scotland, enhanced the movie's compelling visuals, and the star-studded cast cemented the world-building created by the setting and scenery.

Isaac's Frankenstein dutifully embodies the role of mad scientist and tortured genius, revealing a new side of the character unseen in previous adaptations. He showcases Frankenstein's passion, highlighting the consequences of his doomed obsession in every action he takes, emphasizing that his quest to create life was born of a desire to conquer death. Frankenstein is portrayed as a man who descends into madness rather than as a madman with occasional bouts of lucidity.

The Creature, played by Australian actor Jacob Elordi, is a hauntingly beautiful portrayal. Long-gone are the bolts and staples and comically grotesque green complexion, and in its place is a lovingly sewn-together monstrosity of muscle and skin. Elordi, who spent upwards of 11 hours in the makeup chair to become The Creature, is unrecognizable in the role.

This unrecognizability goes beyond the physical transformation, conveying raw emotion and childlike vulnerability across the different stages of The Creature's development, almost entirely non-verbal. Elordi's portrayal is a closer read to the emotional and intelligent capacity shown by The Creature in the book.

The inclusion of religious imagery and historical paintings, ranging from The Crucifixion to"The Creation of Adam" by Michelangelo, is a careful choice by del Toro. Paralleling Frankenstein's creation to the creation of man, the comparison continues with Frankenstein going as far as stating "it is finished" before the climax of The Creature's creation.

English actress and producer Mia Goth plays both Frankenstein's mother, Claire Frankenstein, and Elizabeth Lavenza. Goth, who has made a name for herself in horror, portrays Lavenza as not only strong, but compassionate and kind. Although Lavenza is seen as a love interest for both Victor Frankenstein and The Creature, it is subtle, intentionally not taking over the plot, unlike other recent adaptations of period novels.

Del Toro's "Frankenstein" expertly shows parallels in which Frankenstein repeats the conditions his father, Leopold Frankenstein, inflicted on him. Victor Frankenstein treats his "son," The Creature, as a tool rather than an individual, doling out the same cruelty his father had dealt him. The character choice is a stark contrast to the novel's much more doting father, but it serves the film's plot, ultimately representing nurture versus nature.

While the two-and-a-half-hour film is not a completely book-faithful adaptation of the novel, del Toro's "Frankenstein" achieves a feat unseen in the 200 years of renditions. Through compelling visuals and masterful performances by its lead actress and actors, the spirit of Shelley's "Frankenstein" is lovingly stitched into every frame.

Gianna's rating: 4.5/5

Illustration by Arturo Martinez

North Texas volleyball underclassmen break out for first 20-win season despite uncertain offseason

VOLLEYBALL continued from page 1

Junior middle blocker Loredana Fouonji leads the defense, having received three of the team's seven conference weekly honors, including Defensive Player of the Week on Sept. 29. Sophomore middle blockers Ryann Vik and Addison Achilles are also key contributors to the defensive success.

The Mean Green are also far from lacking offensively. North Texas leads the American Conference at 1,787 total points, sitting at fourth with 17.35 points per set. They have achieved this without a player among the American Conference's top 10 point scorers.

Bedell has stayed the team's kill leader throughout the season, averaging 3.05 kills per set. Her 39 service aces rank second among program single-season leaders since 2008.

"I love getting to be a part of this journey and just coming in every day and knowing I'm playing for something bigger than myself," Bedell said.

North Texas' most unique contributors are three freshman players in Romo, libero Dakota Mitchell and setter Sidney Soria.

Mitchell has 30 service aces on the season and has lingered around the conference's top 10 in digs. Romo has started 23 matches, including a major 3-2 win against Wichita State (17-9, 9-5 American Conference) in which she had a career-high 17 digs.

Meanwhile, Soria and senior setter Alexa Washington have become a one-two punch of opportunity creators. The pair is averaging 4.83 and 5.70 assists per set, respectively.

"Our setters have done a great job," Fleming said. "It's a complete switch of gears for Lex from what they ran last year, which was more of a pin-driven offense. Then Sydney, stepping in as a freshman, you're just not supposed to be able to do that."

Sophomore middle blocker Addison Achilles spikes the ball against Temple at the UNT Volleyball Center on Nov. 9, 2025. **Photo by Neel Patel**

After a 10-2 non-conference start, North Texas stumbled into conference play 1-3 before rattling off eight straight conference wins to make its playoff push.

Bedell noted back-to-back road wins against Tulsa and Wichita State in late October as a turning point for the team's chances at winning the conference.

"That weekend, it felt like we were just riding on a high," Bedell said. "Everything was going right. The way we were treating each other, it was just a really good weekend, and it showed us that we really can compete in the tournament."

Fleming is now the third head coach in program history to reach the 20-win milestone in his first season at the university. He team's current .740 season winning percentage is the second-highest all time behind only the 2017 team.

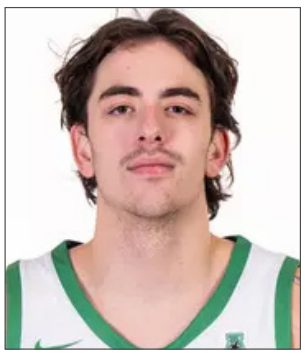
The Mean Green has faced another conference juggernaut in preseason favorite and top seed Rice (17-8, 13-1 American Conference). The Owls won in a sweep on Nov. 7 and will visit Denton to finish the regular season on Nov. 16 at 1 p.m.

Afterwards, the conference tournament runs from Nov. 21-23 at The Corral in Tampa, Florida.

"I think it's just building the confidence that we can compete," Fleming said. "My goal when I took this job is that we should be mentioned in the conversation for American Conference championships, and that happening in the first year is just awesome."

Athlete of the Week:

Dylan Arnett



Credit **Mean Green Sports**

To open its season, North Texas men's basketball began with an undefeated 3-0 start, including a 64-62 win on Nov. 9 over Loyola University Chicago (1-2), aided by a game-winning shot by senior forward Dylan Arnett. In the final seconds of the win, the two teams were tied, but Arnett rose and sank a mid-range shot to seal the Mean Green's win over the Ramblers. Arnett finished with 10 points, four rebounds, three blocks and two steals in an all-around performance. Over three games, his season averages have reflected his all-around impact, averaging 9.3 points, three rebounds, 2.3 blocks and 1.3 steals per game. Arnett is one of several former Cleveland State Vikings who transferred in North Texas with head coach Daniyal Robinson this past offseason. At Cleveland State, he spent the previous three years playing under Robinson.

Senior golfer Malisone Chanthapanya finds early-season breakthrough, overtakes single-round program record

By Dante Longoria
Staff Writer

The smell of freshly cut grass sets the aroma around Bruzzy's UNT Golf Practice Facility, while the crisp ring of a driver meeting a ball off the tee echoes into the still air.

Senior golfer Malisone Chanthapanya methodically checks each box of her several practice routines, a process deliberate and rooted in structure. Her pre-round rituals include a trip to the putting green for 20-30 minutes, followed by repetitions on the driving range.

Every element of her approach has purpose. Chanthapanya marks her golf balls with specific numbers, most often twos and threes. She uses only even-numbered clubs, hitting eight to 12 balls with each, always ending on a solid shot to carry positive momentum forward.

"I think I started picking it up in high school once I started breaking sub-80 and noticed there were certain things I did the day it happened," Chanthapanya said. "I also focus on taking deep belly breaths and imagine everything negative in my body exhaling out and slowing down the objective."

Over time, she noticed that positive outcomes followed when she maintained consistency, and it has since become a cornerstone of her routine.

During her record-setting round in San Marcos on Oct. 19 and 20, she played with a No. 2 marked ball for her first two rounds and switched to a No. 3 marked ball for the record-breaking round the following day.

With a rippling tee shot that "found the middle of the green," followed by a two-putt, the record and a second-place individual finish were secured.

"I know the next day when I play with the same ball, I usually don't play well," Chanthapanya said. "So, I switched to the No. 3 ball for the final round and shot a 64."

Head coach Micahel Akers said the feat was fitting for Chanthapanya's renowned work ethic.

"She was just in the zone, and it was so fun to watch," Akers said. "Nobody deserves it more than her. I don't know if I've ever had a player work as hard as she has, and I've coached a lot of really good players."

Outside of golf, Chanthapanya said she finds inspiration in the trials and lessons of "grit and determination" passed down from her family.

Both of Chanthapanya's parents were born in Laos, a Southeast Asian country located between Thailand and Vietnam. Her father left the country at a young age, moving to France, while her mother immigrated to the United States around middle school. There, they overcame hardships, walking long distances to school and learning a new language while fulfilling duties such as caring for siblings and striving to succeed academically.

Credit **Mean Green Sports**

Chanthapanya's mantra, "The amount of work you put in is the result you are going to get," stems from her upbringing and a personality shaped by her parents. She took their story to heart and let it resonate, building her character and fueling her work ethic.

"I'm always inspired by their story, and I took that with me and applied it in my own way to golf," Chanthapanya said. "I took their story and values, then it kind of incorporated into my personality and the person I am today."

Before arriving in Denton, Chanthapanya's golf journey took shape at Texas Wesleyan University, where she played in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics's Sooner Athletic Conference. During her three seasons, she became one of the most decorated players in Texas Wesleyan history — a three-time NAIA All-American and two-time First Team selection.

After graduating a year early with a bachelor's degree in finance at Texas Wesleyan University, Chanthapanya opted to pursue her fourth year of collegiate golf with the Mean Green while pursuing a master's degree in data analytics and supply chain management.

Her decision was influenced by a conversation with Akers, who had been following her career at Texas Wesleyan. Akers proposed that she come to North Texas and organized a range visit at the program's golf facility, Bruzzy's.

"I talked to her and asked about her plans after graduation, because she had one more year of eligibility," Akers said. "[Chanthapanya] said she was planning on going pro, so I asked, 'What do you think about coming to North Texas for a year?'"

Chanthapanya had a solid performance in her first season with the Mean Green in 2024, finishing with the third-best team scoring average of 74.09. Although the original plan was to play for one season in Denton, she was granted a second year of eligibility through a National Collegiate Athletic Association waiver for NAIA and junior college players.

The next step after finishing out her collegiate career after this season will be playing at the professional level.

"I'm really appreciative of everything that golf has given me and I love the opportunities so I want to see how far and where that takes me," Chanthapanya said.

North Texas football travels to University of Alabama at Birmingham as American Conference race tightens

By Ian Pfaffenberger
Staff Witer

Fresh off the heels of a bye week, North Texas football will aim to take the momentum garnered from its 31-17 win over Navy into an away matchup against the University of Alabama at Birmingham on Nov. 15.

With just three games left in the regular season, the Mean Green (8-1, 4-1 American Conference) have put themselves in a prime position to compete for a berth to the championship game as one of five one-loss American teams. Throughout the multitude of scenarios for North Texas to make an appearance in the championship, the Mean Green must win the rest of its remaining three games.

"I mean, obviously, you have your sights set on those goals, but it doesn't matter if we don't keep winning," redshirt freshman quarterback Drew Mestemaker said. "So, we just can control what we can control and just keep winning."

Currently, there is a four-way tie for second place in the American with Navy (7-2, 5-1) sitting in first. North Texas plays a favorable final three games against opponents with .500 records or worse, starting against the Blazers (3-6, 1-4), who sit 12th in the American. The team will then take on Rice (5-5, 2-4) and Temple (5-5, 3-3).

Despite the appealing matchup on paper, North Texas has had its struggles on the road this season, notably playing a rough first half against Charlotte (1-8, 0-6) on Oct. 24 before taking over in the second half.

"Although we haven't been great, we're undefeated on the road," head coach Eric Morris said. "It's just been a little bit different types of games, I think, [...] and so just consistency, I would like us to put together four quarters on the road."

North Texas will face UAB redshirt sophomore quarterback Ryder Burton, who has been the team's starter for the last three games. He got his first career start and win on Oct. 18 over then-ranked Memphis (8-2, 4-2). Since then, the team has struggled to maintain that momentum, dropping their next two games heading into this week.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Drew Mestemaker scans the field before the snap against Lamar University at DATCU Stadium on Aug. 30, 2025.
Photo by Trennt Rhea

Despite a meager ranking amidst a stacked conference, the Blazers have showcased their offensive talent throughout the season. One example is sophomore wide receiver Iverson Hooks, who has amassed the fourth-most receiving yards and touchdowns in the American, with 677 yards and six touchdowns.

With their familiarity of performing worse against underdog road opponents, the Mean Green said they do not plan on taking the Blazers lightly.

"We treat them like any other team," senior linebacker Trey Fields said. "We come in, come to work and be ready to practice and get ready for the game plan and show them what we got."

On the defensive side, the Blazers have proved to be weaker than their offense. They are currently 130th in scoring defense and 106th in total yards allowed per game, whereas the Mean Green rank second in offensive scoring and fifth in offensive yards per game.

However, Mestemaker said he believes the offensive success for North Texas will not come to light if the team does not overcome its self-created hiccups away from Denton.

"All the games we've struggled in offensively, and just those drives, we've kind of stopped ourselves," Mestemaker said. "I think we just can't shoot ourselves in the foot and just keep moving forward. You know, even a 3-yard gain is better than going backwards or throwing it away."

All season long, the Mean Green's turnover margin has been a core strength. They currently rank fourth in the nation with 11 after forcing three turnovers against Navy. The team should be in for another boost in those rankings, as the Blazers currently sit 122nd in the nation with a -8 turnover margin.

One player in the heart of the turnover-heavy defense has been senior linebacker Shane Whitter. Whitter, who led North Texas in tackles going into the Navy game, suffered a leg injury against the Midshipmen and has been ruled out for the contest against the Blazers. His status for the rest of the season remains questionable as well.

"Heartbreaking for him, I mean, just such a cool story," Morris said. "Honestly was playing as good as anybody on the defensive side of the ball for us. I mean, just an extreme competitor, great teammate and so you hate that for those kids like that."

Despite the loss of a key player, the Mean Green look poised to have a successful final three games and have a shot at postseason success.

"All of us knew we could be here if we put a season together," Mestemaker said. "So I think all of us are happy to be in this situation and excited, but we all know what our sights are set on and what our goals are for this season."

At a Glance:

Volleyball

The Mean Green volleyball team has two final home games, one against Tulane on Nov. 14 and one against Rice (17-8, 13-1 American) on Nov. 16, before the start of the American Conference Championship from Nov. 21-23. North Texas (20-7, 10-4 American) is currently tied for third in the conference heading into its final games before the tournament. The Green Wave (11-14, 3-11 American) will be visiting Denton as the second-to-last seed in the conference. Tulane has already faced the Mean Green and lost 3-2 on Oct. 10.

Women's Basketball

North Texas women's basketball continues its ongoing four-game home with a Nov. 13 game against Nelson University and Abilene Christian on Nov. 19. The Mean Green (2-0) have begun with two blowout 40-plus point wins. Nelson University (4-0), meanwhile, arrives in Denton with a similar scoring margin of 37.8 points. After the team's two home games, North Texas will embark on its first away game to in-state rival Southern Methodist University (1-1) on Nov. 22.

Men's Basketball

Mean Green men's basketball (3-0) will not return to The Super Pit until Nov. 20 against Central Arkansas (1-2), but will first play Saint Mary's (2-0) on Nov. 14 on their two-game road trip. North Texas has averaged 77.3 points per game during its win streak while allowing just 56.3.

Senior forward Tionna Lidge brings championship experience to Mean Green women's basketball team

By Carson Kelly
Staff Writer

On March 19, 2025, at the Paulie Pavilion in Los Angeles, two desperate women's basketball teams battled to keep their seasons alive. In the dying seconds of the game, senior forward Tionna Lidge and her Southern University teammates had a comfortable 11-point lead over UC San Diego.

Even with the game in hand, a palpable tension filled the air. For one team, the season was over. For the other, players were itching to make history.

Southern was seconds away from getting their first-ever win in March Madness, and in the middle of it all was Lidge, who finished the game with 12 points, six rebounds and two assists.

"It was just like we could breathe," Lidge said. "There was more games, but it felt that there was everything we were working for was right there in our hands and we did it."

For the first time in about five years, Lidge will not be suiting up for Southern and the teammates who became family to her. Last summer, she transferred to North Texas to play her final season of collegiate basketball. A move she said she made for multiple reasons, one of which was her family back home in El Paso.

The distance between El Paso and Southern's campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is just over 1,000 miles. A 15-hour car drive separates Lidge from the place she grew up and the family she wants to support her every game.

"My family is really my support system," Lidge said. "My mom came to

Senior forward Tionna Lidge warms up before the game against Oklahoma Christian at The Super Pit on Nov. 4, 2025.
Photo by Ismael Beltran

every game she could when I was in Baton Rouge, but it was a little far, so she couldn't make it to too many. My grandparents, as well, they're getting a little older, so I feel like playing here, they'll be able to make more games."

Not all of her family lives in El Paso, though. Jackie Kennedy, her aunt, lives in Flower Mound, just thirty minutes south of Denton. According to Lidge, before this year, the two were never really that close because Kennedy lived in the DFW area.

However, since moving to North Texas, Kennedy has become someone Lidge can open up to and wind down with.

"We're always going out to eat and just watching games," Lidge said. "We spend a lot of downtime together. She talks about her work, and I talk about practice and everything. Just being able to have that kind of release to have somebody listening to you."

On the court, Lidge is joining a revamped North Texas roster. Just like with her aunt, Lidge has gotten "really close, really fast," with the players surrounding her on the court.

Head coach Jason Burton said on Oct. 13 at American Conference Media Day that he had high expectations for his roster, including veterans like junior guard Andi Schissler and Lidge.

"You look at the two players to my right, and they both won at their respective schools, and they both have experience doing what they do," Burton said on Oct. 13. "And so the confidence level of our team, the confidence level of our players, and I think the confidence that they have in each other already is some of this could be special."

Burton is not the only person who has expectations for Lidge and the other transfers coming into the program. One of the few returning members of the roster from last year is sophomore guard Chania Price, who said the sky is the limit.

"The team has adjusted to having winning players on the team," Price said. "Just encourage each other to [play] the standard we know each of us can play at because we're all elite."

Getting to North Texas was the culmination of her years at Southern and before. After working hard to arrive in Denton, it took time to adjust over the long months of the offseason. Everything at North Texas was new to Lidge, and with that came a tough transition.

"We have to learn a lot of plays and a lot of defenses in a short period of time," Lidge said. "The caliber of practices that we had is a lot more different. It's a lot more running in practice, and there's a lot more consequences to actions here."

This upcoming season will be her last. Lidge said she wants to be a counselor for student athletes and help those who experience the mental health hardships she sometimes faced when she was younger.

"Growing up, I really didn't have resources to like help with my mental health, and when games go bad, I'm stuck and I'm down for days at a time," Lidge said. "I want to be the person that other athletes can come to and kind of give them the tools they need to realize life is so much bigger than basketball or a game is so much bigger than the two or three moments you mess up."

Students should not sacrifice their mental well-being for academic superiority

By Raegan Barrett
Staff Writer

In quest of a successful future, some students prioritize academic progress over all else, leading to 59.9 percent of university students in 2023 experiencing academic burnout — a source of severe anxiety, exhaustion and disengagement.

The mental toll the pursuit of scholastic perfection can exact is not a fair price to pay for a perfect score. This habit has created a detrimental culture of psychologically exhausted students who constantly neglect their mental well-being for consistently high grades.

This is in large part thanks to the escalating trend of striving to be an "academic weapon."

According to Urban Dictionary, the term "academic weapon" refers to someone with high levels of diligence and productivity in a classroom setting. This archetype is increasingly sought after by both high school and university students for its desirable aesthetic of academic success, with the term originating on social media.

However, the idea and execution of being an academic weapon have existed for years, and many scholars attempt to achieve this lifestyle by taking on heavy workloads through clubs, courses and internships. Although the end product is appealing, mental catastrophes trail behind this idealized persona culture.

According to the State of Higher Education 2025 report, based on a study conducted by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation, the leading cause of program withdrawal consideration was due to emotional stress. Additionally, 31 percent of students considering withdrawal decided to go through with the decision due to emotional stress.

This type of tension is a common side effect of pushing oneself too hard, as signing up to play the star student role is not easy. Often, it requires full educational immersion, which can contribute to poor sleep and limited social participation. All heavily detract from the quality of student life and jointly cause all-time high rates of diminishing mental health. According to the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environment, 44 percent of students report symptoms of depression.

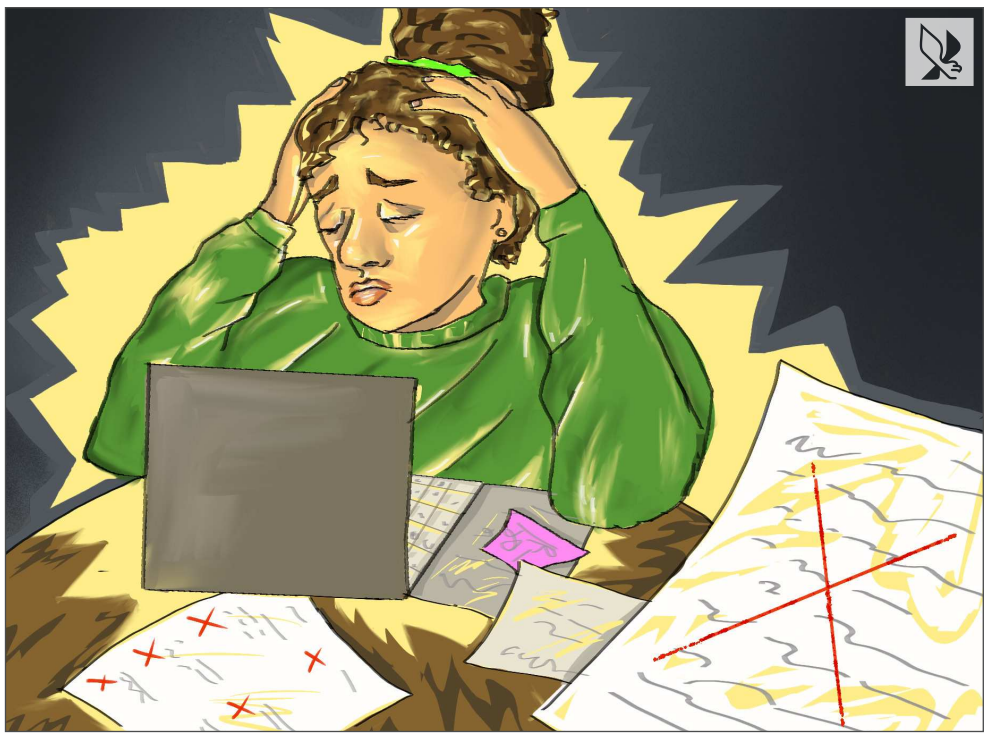


Illustration by Ham Bergman

This mindset can deliver serious blows to a student's self-esteem according to the British Medical Journal. Although it is assumed that vigorous efforts would yield the rewarding feelings of productivity and accomplishment, they can actually leave students feeling a strong sense of impostor syndrome, or a feeling of doubt about their abilities among high-achieving peers.

Although, the constant comparison between oneself and classmates is part of striving to succeed in academics. This can turn friendly acquaintances into academic rivals, burning bridges of possible connections for the sake of scholarly superiority.

In some cases, it can even lead to low-quality assignments due to mental strain. According to Frontiersin, student burnout commonly evolves into a lack of motivation.

The continuation of scholarly strain still prevails within school systems around the globe. It seems to plague student bodies in the interest of mere validation and security — feelings that Gen Z, in particular, has struggled with since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students think it is a special badge they can wear, proudly displayed through their grade point average, whilst willfully ignoring the exhaustion on their faces and in their bodies.

To combat these adverse outcomes, intentional steps need to be taken, such as students taking care of both their mental and physical health and seeking help when needed. Emphasizing wellness in a student's routine promotes better habits.

The university offers both individual and crisis counseling services, included in every student's tuition, located at Chestnut Hall. Talking to someone and getting counseling, especially during moments of academic stress, can prevent burnout and help an individual's long-term well-being.

Learning to set boundaries can also prevent burnout by leaving space for rest and rejuvenation. Avoiding overcommitting to tasks and events can help students adequately manage time to prioritize mental well-being. The word "no" is a powerful tool that students should not be afraid to use when it comes to internal security.

The best —and most difficult — way to fight the fallout of this academic fad is to learn to be OK with not being perfect.

While it is still important to put one's best foot forward while at school, education is not the end of someone's story. For university students who already struggle with balancing schoolwork and maintaining a social life, Mental Health America found that it is vital not to put all their eggs in the scholastic basket. Allowing time for other things, such as relationships and hobbies that are key parts of life, can push an individual forward emotionally.

These small solutions can go a long way for students' health and security, so it is best to step back and reevaluate the emotional strain that overexertion may cost.

The concept of being an academic weapon is great, but it falls short in practice. Students need to take a stand against these unrealistic standards being shoved down their throats and place mental balance at the forefront.

The university should work with its students to create a safer campus

By Leyla Aktas
Staff Writer

Safety at the university should never feel uncertain, as everyone deserves to walk across campus without fear. Students should be able to study late without anxiety and trust that the place meant to nurture their growth also protects their well-being.

However, the number of safety concerns around the university abounds, including poorly lit pathways, reports of harassment and isolated incidents of theft, that chip away at that sense of security.

Safety should not depend on daylight or luck. It should be a constant, woven into every corner of campus life.

The university has prided itself on building a strong community, and now that community deserves the same care in return. Strengthening campus lighting, improving transportation and fostering transparency are not just logistical fixes – they act as promises that every member of the university deserves to feel safe.

While these issues are not unique to just the university's campus, with 86 percent of campuses nationwide reporting acts of violence, these issues show that safety is an ongoing commitment, not a one-time policy.

According to a study by College Factual, the university reported 466 on-campus crime incidents in 2019, while the University of Texas at Arlington reported 220, less than half the university's total. The university also had a smaller student body—39,336 — compared to UTA's 48,635, yet more on-campus incidents occurred.

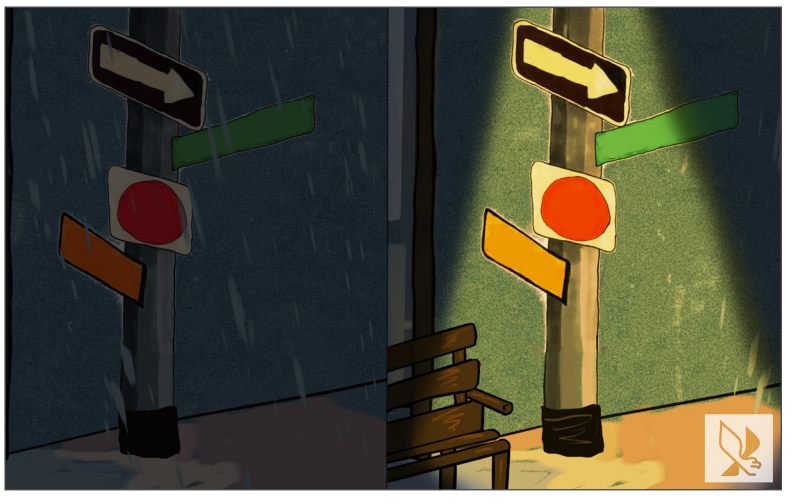


Illustration by Thomas Trevino and Victoria Maldonado

A Princeton University study on pedestrian environments shows that improved lighting and visible security can reduce nighttime risks.

The university has taken essential steps by ensuring patrol presence through the campus police and encouraging safety awareness. Yet the next step in safety should focus on more collaboration, with students, staff and administrators working together to identify areas that need attention.

The university could strengthen collaboration by establishing regular safety forums and joint committees that include these groups, such as the Student Government Association safety walks.

SGA's safety walks identify specific concerns, such as poorly lit areas or isolated walkways, and work together to propose realistic solutions.

Incorporating more students and staff directly in these discussions would not only improve safety measures but also create a stronger sense of shared responsibility across the campus community.

By approaching safety as a shared responsibility, the university can strengthen trust and create an environment where everyone feels both supported and secure.

For university students, safety should not be considered a luxury, as it is the foundation needed to allow learning, creativity and a thriving community. When students feel unsafe, their ability to focus, participate and engage with campus life is deeply affected.

According to a study by Rowan University, perceived campus safety strongly correlates with students' academic performance and mental well-being. In other words, safety directly supports the mission of higher education.

By maintaining well-lit spaces, reliable transportation options and clear communication channels, the university can create an atmosphere where students are not distracted by fear but encouraged by a genuine sense of belonging and trust.

A safer university also means a safer city. The university is deeply connected to the Denton community as students live, work and spend time across the same streets and neighborhoods as residents. When campus safety improves, that sense of security naturally extends beyond university borders, strengthening trust and cooperation between students and the city.

According to the City of Denton 2024 Citizen Survey, community members identified public safety and lighting as top priorities for overall quality of life. By addressing these concerns together, the university and Denton can create shared spaces that are welcoming, well-lit and active after dark.

Safer routes encourage more local business activity, build stronger community engagement and reduce the sense of separation between campus and city life. In the end, safety is not just a campus issue – it is a community investment that benefits everyone.

True safety is not measured by the number of patrol cars on the road or the brightness of a single lamp. It exists in the quiet confidence of walking to one's home without fear, in the freedom to focus on one's dreams instead of surroundings.

Each new light post, improved walkway and honest conversation about safety becomes a declaration that a community cares for one another.

Establishing joint safety committees or open forums would help ensure that everyone's perspective is heard and that solutions are practical and inclusive.

The university should strive to build a safe community that builds off of students' and the wider Denton community's feedback to create real solutions that address everyday safety concerns.

Prioritizing safety concerns is crucial to maintaining a supportive and thriving learning environment that allows students to feel secure on-campus and supported by the university they invest their time and money into.